



CITY OF
PORTLAND, OREGON

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

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February 5, 2020

Senator Floyd Prozanski
Senate Committee on Judiciary
900 Court Street NE, Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 1546

Chair Prozanski and members of the committee,

The City of Portland urges your support for SB 1546, specifically the portion of the bill that addresses ORS 801.208, the definition of a commercial motor vehicle. Operators of commercial motor vehicles are required to have a commercial driver's license. The law provides exceptions for vehicles operated by some first responders but not police officers. SB 1546 provides an exception for emergency vehicles operated by police officers. This legislation will address a current gap that exists between state and federal law.

SB 1546 will provide clear guidance on law enforcement operation of commercial motor vehicles used in emergency response. Federal law provides exceptions for first responders and other persons who operate commercial motor vehicles that are necessary to the preservation of life or property or execution of emergency government functions. ORS 801.208, however, does not provide an exception for all first responders. While one exists for firefighters, there is no exception for emergency vehicles operated by police officers.

The alignment of state and federal law will allow for consistent interpretation by state agencies and divisions such as the Oregon Department of Motor Vehicles and the Oregon Department of Transportation and local jurisdictions about the classification of vehicles used by police officers in emergency response.

Thank you for taking up this issue. We urge your support of SB 1546's amendment to ORS 801.208.

Sincerely,

Stacy Cowan
State Relations Manager
Office of Government Relations